

THE STOLEN DETECTIVE

By Lucius Withers

Illustrated by Dorothy Dulin.



I HAD just begun undressing and was rather angry because old Phillips had been arrested. I was standing in the middle of the floor winding my watch. My back was toward the door there leading into the hall. I heard the door open and wheeled about, thinking that it was my mother or sister.

"At that moment the intruder, a powerful fellow, stockily built and rather below medium height, hurled himself across the room at me. I caught the gleam of a knife and tried to get out of its way, but he caught me in the shoulder. We grappled and fought from the middle of the room over toward the bed. He seemed to be bent on throwing me on the bed. I was so taken by surprise that I didn't cry out, and we fought silently, our steps, I suppose, making scarcely any noise on the rugs, else some one would have been alarmed.

"I finally managed to wrench the knife from him. I don't know how I did it, but that seemed to get his nerve. He broke away from me and ran. Then I

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fainted, but not before I had torn the mask from his face. He was a run looking customer—all whisker bristles and dark. I think that his eyes were gray, but I can't be sure about that.

"I do not remember having done so, but I suppose that I must have cried out just as I was fainting, for when I came to consciousness I was in bed here and the doctor was on his way. Who the devil was it, anyway, McCalman? Do you know?"

The detective shook his head and said: "You haven't told us yet how he was dressed."

Reggie seemed to ponder for a moment and then said: "Well, now, that's a funny thing, but do you know, I can't remember. I'd stake my life on it though that he was dressed in workman's clothes, but as to the color and all that sort of thing I don't remember."

While Reggie was telling his story Mrs. Willoughby came back into the room. She took up the recital where he left off.

"Quite naturally we had been very much upset by the arrest of our butler and the coming of the police to guard the house, so I was not asleep when I heard Reggie cry out. His scream was not a loud one and could not have been heard outside the house or perhaps off of the upper floors.

"I ran out into the hall at the same moment with my daughter, and the next

instant a man dashed out of my son's room and made off down the hall and back stairway. He slammed the stairway door behind him.

We ran to the front of the house, and from one of the upper windows gave the alarm; then we ran in to my son.

"My daughter's maid was the only servant in the house

four above. The chauffeur was not at home, thereby making the way clear for the searchers.

the man from headquarters, who added, "and we have ransacked these quarters from top to bottom without result."

"All right," answered my friend. Then to the chief: "Chief, I'm going to the Graystone. Would you care to come along?"

Chief O'Lunt's assent was an eager one, and we were soon on our way to the hotel which McCalman and I had quitted so short a time before.

At the Willoughby home and while we waited in the drawing-room for the coming of Charlie my friend had stripped away enough of his disguise to make himself recognizable as Dugald

McCalman rather than as Gerald Harcourt.

I was informed during the ride that it would be well for me to remain inside the taxi while it waited for the two other men before the Graystone. I could have willed it otherwise had the matter been left for my choosing. But I thought that I understood McCalman's reason for the decision. He probably did not wish the great Bos to know that he had visited him but a short time before in disguise. I had not been in disguise, but had worn the same clothes which I wore at that moment, and the criminal's suspicion would certainly have been stirred.

My two companions left the taxi the moment it drew up in front of the tall

gray hotel facing Lake Michigan. But in less than a quarter of an hour I was surprised to see them return and re-enter the taxi. Chief O'Lunt ordered the chauffeur to drive us back to headquarters. I was burning to question my friend, but he and O'Lunt seemed to be in moods for silence.

In front of headquarters O'Lunt left us after giving his driver instructions to take McCalman and I home. He told us that he would dismiss and pay the driver of the other taxi.

Although I was still eager to learn the result of the latest call upon M. Steinfeldt, I by no means felt at liberty to question my friend, though I resented, in some degree, his silence during the first few blocks of our ride. He seemed

"He left no tracks and we have not been able to find where he left the house, or for that matter where he entered it either," explained Matthews as we joined him.

McCalman did not answer at once. For several minutes he seemed to be plunged in thought. Then turning to Matthews, he said: "Watch every window and every door like a hawk. I more than half believe that he is in the house yet."

The detective gave an indicating jerk of his head back toward the Willoughby residence.

"Where does the butler sleep?" he inquired of Matthews.

"Here with the chauffeur," answered

at the time, and she was with my daughter in her room, but was too frightened to be of any use.

"A thorough search of the house and premises were made, but the man had gotten away."

"Do any of your neighbors know of the attack or that the house is being guarded?" asked McCalman.

"I do not think so," answered Mrs. Willoughby.

The woman spoke quite calmly and in marked manner to the nervous speech of her injured son.

McCalman turned to O'Lunt.

"Get me the man in charge," he ordered, while the three of us made our way out of Reggie's room.

We found Lieutenant Matthews and two of his assistants at the back of the place and engaged in making a search of the garage and the rooms of the chauffeur.

